

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-2 and 7-14 are now in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 14 has been added. Claims 3-6 have been cancelled.

In item 1 on pages 2-4 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1-2 and 5-13 have been rejected as being anticipated by Yraceburu et al. (US Pat. No. 6,409,332) under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b).

The rejection has been noted and claim 1 has been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. More specifically, the features of claims 5-6 have been added to claim 1.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, inter alia:

a virtually limited first suction chamber disposed beneath the region of the printing heads, said first suction chamber having termination edges extending transversely to a transporting direction of said movable belt and limiting said first suction chamber in a

longitudinal direction of said movable belt, said first suction chamber being connected to said negative-pressure source via said throttle opening; and

further suction chambers connected to said negative-pressure source, said further suction chambers being located adjacent said first suction chamber and having a greater negative pressure than that of said first suction chamber. (Emphasis added.)

Yraceburu et al. disclose only one suction chamber (vacuum box 307, see Fig. 3), which is located beneath the movable belt of the device. However, Yraceburu et al. do not disclose any further and adjacent suction chambers. Even if a person skilled in the art would interpret ports 315, 315' and 315'' as separate suction chambers which are located adjacent each other, Yraceburu et al. do not disclose the feature that the further suction chambers which are located adjacent a first suction chamber have a greater negative pressure than that of the first suction chamber. Since all of the ports are connected to the vacuum box 307, a person skilled in the art would understand that in all ports there is the same negative pressure.

In contrast, in the invention of the instant application, the first suction chamber (13) is separated from the adjacent further suction chambers by the termination edges (31) so that the pressure in the first suction chamber (13) can be adjusted.

Clearly, Yraceburu et al. do not show "a virtually limited first suction chamber disposed beneath the region of the printing heads, said first suction chamber having termination edges extending transversely to a transporting direction of said movable belt and limiting said first suction chamber in a longitudinal direction of said movable belt, said first suction chamber being connected to said negative-pressure source via said throttle opening; and further suction chambers connected to said negative-pressure source, said further suction chambers being located adjacent said first suction chamber and having a greater negative pressure than that of said first suction chamber", as recited in claim 1 of the instant application.

Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over Yraceburu et al. and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

Claim 14 has been added. The support for claim 14 can be found on page 5, lines 9-11 and 24; page 6, lines 10-15; page 15, lines 8-9, 16-17, and 22-24; page 15, line 26 to page 16, line 1; and page 16, lines 3-5 and 11-12 of the specification. Since, as discussed above, Yraceburu et al. do not disclose

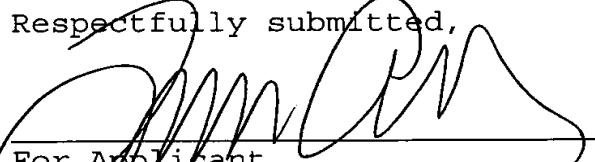
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the feature that the further suction chambers which are located adjacent the first suction chamber have a greater negative pressure than that of the first suction chamber, claim 14 is believed to be patentable.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-2 and 7-14 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,  
  
For Applicant  
YC:cgm

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